

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method of modifying an antibiotic-producing strain of *Streptomyces coelicolor* ~~or *Streptomyces lividans*~~ to increase antibiotic production in said strain, the method comprising functionally deleting in said strain the *scbA* gene by introducing a deletion, stop codon or frameshift into the coding sequence of said gene.

2.-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently amended) A modified strain of *Streptomyces coelicolor* ~~or *Streptomyces lividans*~~, the modified strain having a functional deletion of the *scbA* gene, said functional deletion being effected by introducing a deletion, stop codon or frameshift into the coding sequence of said gene, whereby production of at least one antibiotic in said modified strain is increased compared to a wild-type strain of *Streptomyces coelicolor* ~~or *Streptomyces lividans*~~, respectively.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the strain is *S. coelicolor* A3(2) ~~or *S. lividans* 66.~~

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently amended) The strain of claim 9, which is a modified strain of *S. coelicolor* A3(2) ~~or *S. lividans* 66.~~

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently amended) A method for identifying *Streptomyces* species in which antibiotic production is increased by the functional deletion of the *scbA* gene of *S. coelicolor* or a homolog thereof, said *scbA* gene or said homolog having a nucleotide sequence which:

(a) is the complement of nucleotides 2142-1199 of SEQ ID NO: 19;

(b) encodes a polypeptide having at least 35% sequence identity with SEQ ID NO: 17; and/or

(c) is capable of specific hybridization with the amplification product obtained using the primers:

oligo1 (5'-GACCACGT(CG)CC(CG)GGCATG; SEQ ID NO: 1)

and

oligo2 (5'-GTCCTG(CG)TGGCC(CG)GT(CG)AC(CG)CG(CG)AC;

SEO ID NO: 2)

which produce said amplification product from total DNA of said species or strain,

the method comprising functionally deleting the ~~scb~~scbA gene of ~~S. coelicolor~~coelicolor or ~~a~~said homolog thereof in an antibiotic-producing strain of a *Streptomyces* species by introducing a deletion, stop codon or frameshift into the coding sequence of said gene, the effect of said deletion on increasing said antibiotic production in said antibiotic-producing strain being unknown, said species being other than *S. virginiae* and S. griseus, culturing said strain under conditions suitable for the production of antibiotic, and determining whether antibiotic production in said strain is increased.

16.-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently amended) The method of claim 19, wherein said nucleotide sequence encodes a polypeptide having at least 50% sequence identity with the amino acid sequence of ~~Fig. 10~~ SEO ID NO:17.

21. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein said sequence identity is at least 65%.

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21, wherein said sequence identity is at least 80%.

23. (Previously presented) The method of claim 22, wherein said sequence identity is at least 95%.

24.-32. (Cancelled)